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US POLICY ON THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, 1945-1975. *1975.*

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Herbert Y. Schandler
Specialist in National Defense

August 14, 1975

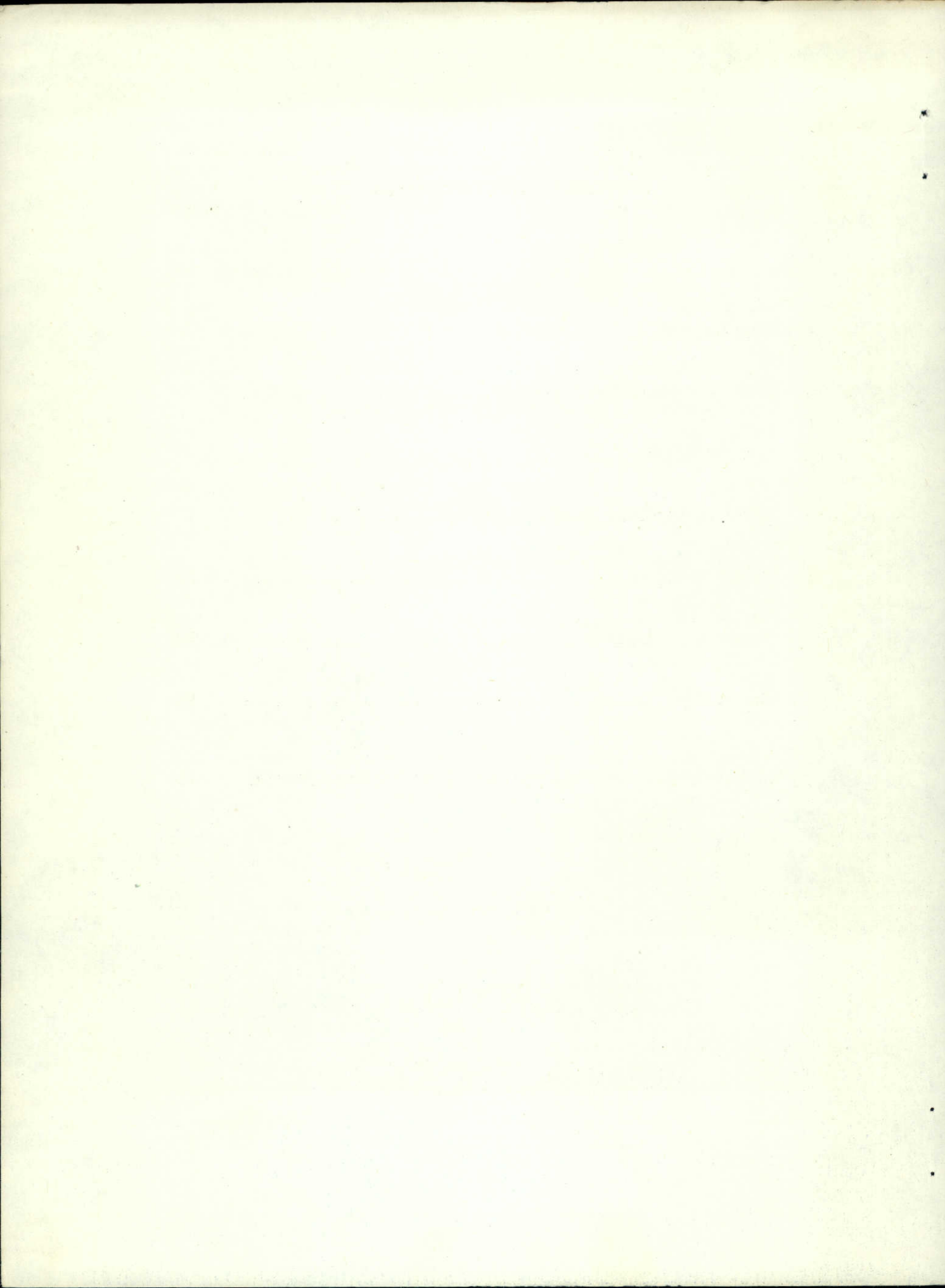


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GLOSSARY*

- Antiballistic Missile Defense** -- All measures to intercept and destroy hostile ballistic missiles, or otherwise neutralize them. Equipment includes weapons, target acquisition, tracking and guidance radars, plus ancillary installations.
- Arms Control** -- Explicit or implicit international agreements that govern the numbers, types, characteristics, deployment, and use of armed forces and armaments. See also Arms Limitation and Disarmament.
- Arms Limitation** -- An agreement to restrict quantitative holdings of or qualitative improvements in specific armaments or weapons systems. See also Arms Control.
- Assured Destruction** -- A highly reliable ability to inflict unacceptable damage on any aggressor or combination of aggressors at any time during the course of a nuclear exchange, even after absorbing a surprise first strike.
- Ballistic Missile** -- A pilotless projectile propelled into space by one or more rocket boosters. Thrust is terminated at some early stage, after which reentry vehicles follow trajectories that are governed mainly by gravity and aerodynamic drag. Mid-course corrections and terminal guidance permit only minor modifications to the flight path.
- Bomb** -- A weapon dropped from a manned aircraft of any sort. Gravity is the primary force, but "smart" bombs can be guided electronically.
- Containment** -- Measures to discourage or prevent the expansion of enemy territorial holdings and/or influence. Specifically, a U. S. policy directed against Communist expansion.
- Controlled Counterforce War** -- War in which one or both sides concentrate on reducing enemy strategic retaliatory forces in a bargaining situation, and take special precautions to minimize collateral casualties and damage. See also Controlled War.
- Controlled War** -- A war waged in response to the continuous receipt and evaluation of information concerning changes in the situation, combined with the competence to adjust accordingly. See also Controlled Counterforce War.
- Conventional (Forces, War, Weapons)** -- Military organizations, hostilities, and hardware that exclude nuclear, chemical, and biological capabilities.

- Counterforce -- The employment of strategic air and missile forces to destroy, or render impotent, military capabilities of an enemy force. Bombers and their bases, ballistic missile submarines, ICBM silos, ABM and air defense installations, command and control centers, and nuclear stockpiles are typical counterforce targets.
- Countervalue -- The concepts, plans, weapons, and actions used to destroy or neutralize selected enemy population centers, industries, resources, and/or institutions. See also Counterforce.
- Credibility -- Clear evidence that capabilities and national will are sufficient to support purported policies.
- Damage Limitation -- Active and/or passive efforts to restrict the level or real extent of devastation during war. Includes counterforce operations of all kinds, as well as civil defense.
- Deterrence -- Measures to prevent, rather than prosecute, wars, using psychological, as opposed to physical, means. Deterrent capabilities reinforce defense, and vice versa. See also Nuclear Deterrence and Mutual Deterrence.
- Disarmament -- The reduction of armed forces and/or armaments as a result of unilateral initiatives or international agreement. See also Arms Control and Arms Limitation.
- Escalation -- A increase (deliberate or unpremeditated) in the scope or intensity of a conflict.
- Essential Equivalence -- A policy which stipulates a need for approximately equal capabilities and effectiveness, but does not demand numerical equality, between the central strategic systems of the United States and the Soviet Union. The size and capability of U.S. strategic nuclear forces is geared to Soviet capabilities and developments. Consequently, it is a synonym for parity. See also Parity, Sufficiency and Overkill.
- Finite Deterrence -- Deterrent power predicated on objective capabilities sufficient to satisfy precisely calculable needs under any conceivable circumstances. See also Deterrence, Nuclear Deterrence, and Mutual Deterrence.
- First-Strike -- The first offensive move of a war. As applied to general nuclear war, it implies the ability to eliminate effective retaliation by the opposition. See also Second Strike.

- First Use -- The initial employment of specific powers during the conduct of a war. A belligerent could execute a second strike in response to aggression, yet be the first to employ nuclear weapons. See also First Strike.
- Flexible Response -- A strategy predicated on capabilities to act effectively across the entire spectrum of war at times, places, and in manners of the user's choosing. See also Graduated Response.
- Forward Base -- A military installation maintained on foreign soil or on a distant possession that is conveniently located with regard to actual or potential areas of operations.
- Forward Defense -- Protective measures taken to contain and/or repulse military aggression as close to the original line of contact as possible.
- General Purpose Forces -- All combat forces not designed primarily to accomplish strategic offensive or defensive missions. Tactical aircraft are an example. See also Strategic Forces.
- General War -- Armed conflict between major powers in which the total resources of the belligerents are employed, and the national survival of a major belligerent is in jeopardy. Commonly reserved for a showdown between the United States and U. S. S. R., featuring nuclear weapons.
- Graduated Deterrence -- A range of deterrent power that affords credible capabilities to inhibit aggression across all, or a considerable portion, of the conflict spectrum. See also Deterrence and Mutual Deterrence.
- Graduated Response -- The incremental application of national power in ways that allow the opposition to accommodate one step at a time. Sometimes called "piece-mealing." See also Flexible Response.
- Hard Target -- A target protected against the blast, heat, and radiation produced by nuclear explosions. There are many degrees of hardening. See also Soft Target.
- High Threshold -- An intangible line between levels and types of conflict across which one or more antagonists plan to escalate with great reluctance after other courses of action fail, or which they could be compelled to cross only if subjected to immense pressures. See also Low Threshold and Threshold.
- Intercontinental Ballistic Missile -- A ballistic missile with a range 3,000 to 8,000 nautical miles. See also Ballistic missile .

Launch-On-Warning -- Retaliatory strikes triggered upon notification that an enemy attack is in progress, but before hostile forces or ordnance violate friendly soil.

Limited Strategic War -- A form of general war in which one or more belligerents exercise voluntary restraints to restrict casualties and/or damage. See also General War and Limited War.

Limited War -- Armed encounters, exclusive of incidents, in which one or more major powers or their proxies voluntarily exercise various types and degrees of restraint to prevent unmanageable escalation. See also Escalation and Limited Strategic War.

Low Threshold -- An intangible line between levels and types of conflict across which one or more antagonists plan to escalate with scant regret, or which they would be compelled to cross quickly if subjected to pressures. See also High Threshold and Threshold.

Mass-Destruction (War, Weapons) -- Conflict and instruments of conflict capable of creating casualties and devastation indiscriminately on a colossal scale; particularly, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and warfare. See also Nuclear Weapons.

Massive Retaliation -- The act of countering aggression of any type with tremendous destructive power; particularly a crushing nuclear response to any provocation deemed serious enough to warrant military action.

Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) -- A missile payload comprising two or more warheads that can engage separate targets.

Mutual Deterrence -- A stable situation in which two or more countries or coalitions of countries are inhibited from attacking each other because the casualties and/or damage resulting from retaliation would be unacceptable. See also Deterrence and Nuclear Deterrence.

Nuclear Delivery System -- A nuclear weapon, together with its means of propulsion and associated installations. Includes carriers such as aircraft, ships, and motor vehicles. See also Nuclear Weapon.

Nuclear Deterrence - Measures to prevent, rather than prosecute nuclear wars. Psychological (as opposed to physical) means prevail, but armed forces play a crucial role. See also Deterrence and Mutual Deterrence.

✓ Nuclear Nonproliferation -- Arms control measures designed to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons and delivery means by nations that do not have a nuclear capability. See also Nuclear Proliferation.

Nuclear Proliferation -- The process by which one country after another comes into possession of nuclear delivery systems or attains the right to determine the use of nuclear weapons possessed by another power. See also Nuclear Nonproliferation.

✓ Nuclear War -- Conflict in which one or more strategic or tactical nuclear weapons are detonated for exemplary, symbolic, or combative purposes.

✓ Nuclear Weapon -- A bomb, missile warhead, or other deliverable ordnance item (as opposed to an experimental device) that explodes as a result of energy released by atomic nuclei as a result of fission, fusion, or both. See also Nuclear Delivery System.

Overkill -- Destructive capabilities in excess of those which logically should be adequate to destroy specified targets and/or attain specific security objectives.

✓ Parity -- A condition in which opposing forces possess capabilities of certain kinds that are approximately equal in over-all-effectiveness. See also Sufficiency and Superiority.

✓ Preemptive War -- A war initiated on the basis of incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent. See also Preventive War.

✓ Preventive War -- A war initiated in the belief that armed conflict, while not imminent, is inevitable, and that to delay would involve greater risk. See also Preemptive War.

Second-Strike -- Excludes preemptive and preventive actions before the onset of a war. After an aggressor initiates hostilities, the defender retaliates. In general nuclear war, this implies the ability to survive a surprise first strike and respond effectively. See also First Strike.

Soft Target -- A target not protected against the blast, heat, and radiation produced by nuclear explosions. There are many degrees of softness. Some missiles and aircraft, for example, are built in ways that ward off certain effects, but they are "soft" in comparison with shelters and silos. See also Hard Target.

Spasm War -- A brief, cataclysmic conflict in which all available destructive power is employed with scant regard for the consequences. If super powers are involved, spasmic combat is a form of general war. See also General War.

- Strategic Air War -- Aerospace operations directed against the enemy's war-making capacity. Typical targets include industry, stockpiles of raw materials and finished products, power systems, transportation and communication centers, and strategic weapons systems.
- Strategic Bomber -- A multi-engine aircraft with international range, designed specifically to engage targets whose destruction would reduce an enemy's capacity and/or will to wage war.
- Strategic Forces -- Commonly refers to U. S. nuclear weapons that can engage targets in the Soviet Union and China, and to Soviet/Chinese weapons that can strike the United States. Also includes aerospace defensive elements. See also General Purpose Forces.
- Strategic Nuclear Operations -- The use of nuclear weapons against an enemy's homeland so as to reduce his capacity and/or will wage war. Also includes actions to defend friendly assets from similar forays by foes.
- Strategic Retaliatory (Concepts and Forces) -- Second-strike strategies and forces designed primarily to destroy the enemy's war-making capacity during general war or to so degrade it that the opposition collapses.
- Strategic Stability -- A state of equilibrium which encourages prudence by opponents facing the possibility of general war. Tendencies toward an arms race are restrained, since maneuvering for marginal advantage is meaningless.
- Strategic Weapons System -- An offensive or defensive projectile, its means of delivery, and ancillary equipment designed primarily for general war purposes.
- Sufficiency -- Capabilities adequate to attain national security objectives without waste. The size and structure of forces are geared to the assigned tasks to be accomplished by those forces. Some systems theoretically could be numerically superior to enemy counterparts, others equal, and others inferior. See also Parity, Essential Equivalence, and Finite Deterrence.
- Superiority -- A condition wherein one country or coalition of countries possesses markedly greater capabilities of certain kinds than the opposition. See also Parity and Sufficiency.

✓ Threshold -- An intangible and adjustable line between levels and types of conflict, such as the separation between nuclear and nonnuclear warfare. See also High Threshold and Low Threshold.

Verification -- Inspection and/or surveillance measures to determine compliance with arms control agreements. See also Arms Control and Arms Limitation.

* John M. Collins, Grand Strategy: Principals and Practices, Appendix 1, (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1973.) pp. 263-282; John M. Collins, Strategic Nuclear Delivery Systems: How Many? What Combinations? Congressional Research Service 74-177F, October 7, 1974, pp. 110-123.

Threshold -- An intrinsic administrative level or level
and type of control which the separation between
and non-essential work. See also: Threshold, Law
Threshold.

Verification -- Inspection of work or performance measures
to identify conditions which require control or
also: Work Control, Performance Limitation.

John W. Collins, Chief Strategist, Performance and
Appendix I (Appendix, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974)
on 18-188; John W. Collins, Strategic Planning, 1971
System: How Many Work Components? (1971)
Personnel Service (1971, October, 1972, 1973)

U.S. POLICY ON THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, 1945-1975

I. INTRODUCTION

A major impediment for the informed person to intelligent discussion and understanding of U.S. nuclear theory and strategy is the barrier of an exotic jargon that has grown up around that strategy. Both in the academic community and in Government policy organs, the distinctions between various types of warfare and various methods of utilizing national nuclear power have become voluminous, technical, and often overlapping. Nevertheless, each of these terms has specific and far-reaching meaning insofar as American policy, strategy, diplomacy, and force structure are concerned. Consequently, an understanding of the basic elements of these technical theories is a necessity for knowledgeable examination, discussion, and policy making in this vital area.

This paper will discuss, in large part, the first-use of nuclear weapons by the United States. This term is often confused with first-strike using nuclear weapons. Consequently, an understanding of the meanings of those two terms and of the distinction between them is a necessary beginning. First strike refers to the initial offensive move of a war. It is the initiation of a war, either general or limited, either preemptive or preventive. In a nuclear war, especially against an enemy with a nuclear retaliatory capability, a first strike implies the ability to eliminate effective retaliation.

It has never been the official policy of the United States to develop a first strike capability or to threaten to launch a pre-emptive or preventitive war, either nuclear or nonnuclear. It has been an American tradition, carried forward into the nuclear age, that we do not start wars. President John F. Kennedy stated this policy succinctly in 1961:

Our arms will never be used to strike the first blow in any attack. . . . It is our national tradition. . . . We are not creating forces for a first strike against any other nation.^{1/}

The first use of nuclear or other weapons indicates the initial retaliatory employment of that weapon during the conduct of a war. It has been an American tradition that, if war does come, we will use all means to end it successfully and as quickly as possible. The willingness of the United States to use the awesome power of the atomic bomb to end aggression was demonstrated in dramatic fashion at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This willingness to use the power of the atom to deter aggression, or to defeat it if it occurs, has been a consistent element of American national security policy since that time.

The degree of dependence on first use of nuclear weapons in U. S. security policy has varied over the years from the

1/ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962) p. 230.

time of American nuclear monopoly to the present condition of nuclear parity with the Soviet Union. Throughout this period, U.S. nuclear weapons and their contemplated use have been a strategic substitute for large numbers of American and allied ground forces in being and as a deterrent to the conventional threat posed by the massive ground forces of the Soviet Union and Communist China.

When the United States possessed a monopoly of nuclear weapons, the threat of the first use of these weapons served as a strong deterrent to Soviet aggression. The policy of "massive retaliation" was an explicit statement of our strategy of first use. This strategy insofar as strategic nuclear war was concerned became less credible as the Soviet Union developed its own nuclear attack capability. The strategy of "massive retaliation" was replaced by a strategy of assured destruction in the strategic area and the strategy of "flexible response" in non-strategic warfare.

The first use of tactical nuclear weapons to counter larger Communist ground forces has been a part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) strategy of deterrence and defense since 1954, and has also been seen as providing a similar deterrent effect against Chinese adventurism in Asia.

The United States, in its military strategy, has not sought to deny itself the option of using nuclear weapons to defeat any

Communist aggression and has specifically and consistently, indicated its willingness to use these weapons as required to protect our interests and our allies. However, as our potential adversaries have come into possession of nuclear weapons, the United States has attempted to seek other options in order to raise the nuclear threshold, the point at which the first use of these weapons would be required to prevent defeat or to meet strong conventional attack. These options have included collective security agreements, building up the conventional forces of ourself and our allies, and nuclear arms control and arms limitation agreements.

II. STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The U. S. emerged from World War II as the most powerful nation on earth, the leader of the free world and, for a brief period of years, the sole custodian of the atomic bomb. In his report to the Secretary of War in 1945, General Marshall stated:

For the first time since assuming this office six years ago, it is possible for me to report that the security of the United States is entirely in our own hands.^{1/}

Aware that it could never again pursue a policy of isolation--as it had done after World War I--the U. S. joined 49 other nations in San Francisco on June 26, 1945 in creating the United Nations (UN). In the hopeful enthusiasm generated by the victory of the wartime Grand Alliance over Nazi, Fascist and Japanese aggression, the U. S. looked to the UN, and in particular to cooperation among the five permanent members of the Security Council, to keep the peace in the post-war period. Again, as it had done after World War I, the U. S. rapidly disarmed, drastically cutting its military budget and demobilizing most of its troops. But in 1945, unlike 1919, the U. S. had one weapon which no other country possessed -- the atomic bomb.

This hope for peaceful cooperation was soon replaced by Soviet hostility and intransigence and by Great Power confrontation, both in and out of the United Nations. The U. S. policy of "containment" of Soviet expansion was soon spelled out

^{1/} Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, July 1, 1943 to June 30, 1945, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), p. 1.

and adopted.^{1/}

From 1946 through 1950, a military balance existed between the Red Army and the American atomic bomb. Atomic weapons, although an American monopoly during this period, were relatively scarce as were the strategic bombers capable of carrying them to Soviet targets. An air war against the Soviet Union fought with nuclear weapons would not alone wipe out enemy forces or keep the large Red Army from occupying Western Europe. Thus, the United States leadership saw no clear guarantee of military victory in its sole possession of the atomic bomb, but also saw no military alternative to containing Communist expansion than the threat of atomic retaliation. General Bradley, first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made this explicit in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee in October, 1949, as follows:

Strategic bombing has a high priority in our military planning, because we cannot hope to keep forces in being of sufficient size to meet Russia in the early stages of war. This is particularly true since we are never going to start the war, and the Soviet Union because of their peculiar governmental organization can choose the date of starting it.

Lacking such forces in being, our greatest strength lies in the threat of quick retaliation in the event we are attacked.^{2/}

The actions and declarations of the Truman Administration indicated that American atomic retaliation, while a real possibility, would be a response only to a major attack upon western Europe. Truman's own view has been quoted as follows:

^{1/} George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct,"
Foreign Affairs, vol. xxv (July 1949), 566-582.

^{2/} The National Defense Program--Unification and Strategy,
Hearings, House Committee on Armed Services, 81st
Congress, 1st session, 1949, p. 522.

I don't think we ought to use this thing unless we absolutely have to. It is a terrible thing to order the use of something that is so terribly destructive, destructive beyond anything we have ever had. You have got to understand that this isn't a military weapon. It is used to wipe out women and children and unarmed people, and not for military uses. So we have got to treat this differently from rifles and cannon and ordinary things like that. 1/

Thus, even while the basing of nuclear-capable B-29 strategic bombers in West Germany and Great Britain demonstrated the will-²ingness of the United States to brandish and use this weapon, the Administration developed alternative programs of economic aid and collective security to provide for the strategic defense of Western Europe. Aid to Greece and Turkey in 1947, the European Recovery Program in 1948, and the ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 all served to counter Soviet threats in this area and to preclude the necessity of utilizing our atomic monopoly. While testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in May 1951, Secretary of State Marshall summed up the U.S. postwar policy of dealing with the struggle against Communist aggression:

For the last 5 years our supreme policy has been to curb Communist aggression and, if possible, to avoid another world war in doing so. The execution of this policy has

1/ Quoted in David E. Lilienthal, The Journals of David E. Lilienthal: Volume II, The Atomic Energy Years, 1945-1950 (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 391.

2/ "Strategic Air Command: The Deterrent Force," Air Force, xl, (August 1957), 242-48; "U.S. Bases in Britain," The World Today, xvi; (August 1960), 319-25.

required extraordinary patience, firmness and determination in meeting and helping our allies to meet challenges in Iran, Greece, Turkey, Trieste, Berlin, and Indochina, and finally Korea* * *. There can be, I think, no quick and decisive solution to this global struggle short of resorting to another world war. The cost of such a conflict is beyond calculation. It is, therefore, our policy to contain Communist aggression in different fashions in different areas without resorting to total war, if that be possible to avoid.1/

By 1954, however, with the inauguration of a new administration, the strategic picture had changed. The U. S. nuclear monopoly had ended with the explosion of a Russian atomic device in 1949. The invasion of Korea had demonstrated Communist willingness to use ground forces for local aggression. This "New Look," as the new military policy of the Eisenhower Administration came to be called, reflected a decision to place greater reliance upon the first use of nuclear weapons. In the words of one White House advisor:

The President made it clear from the beginning that defense strategy plans were to recognize the existence of atomic weapons and the fact they would be used if needed. There was no hesitation in his mind. He became irritated with plans based on any assumption these weapons were not to be used. In effect, he told these people, "This isn't a debate any longer; we must face fact." He was very clear on the point that strategy and budgets be developed on that decision.2/

This policy of "massive retaliation" was enunciated by President Eisenhower in his State of the Union address to

1/ Congressional Record, April 2, 1953, 2716-2718.

2/ Quoted in C. J. V. Murphy, "The Eisenhower Shift," Fortune, vol. 53, March 1956, p. 234.

Congress on January 7, 1954:

As we enter this new year, our military power continues to grow. This power is for our own defense and to deter aggression. We shall not be aggressors, but we and our allies have and will maintain a massive capability to strike back.^{1/}

Secretary of State Dulles made the policy explicit in a famous speech the following week (January 12, 1954) to the Council on Foreign Relations:

But before military planning could be changed, the President and his advisors . . . had to take some basic policy decisions. This has been done. The basic decision was to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly by means and at places of our choosing.^{2/}

The decision to place greater reliance upon the first use of nuclear weapons had as its basic rationale, other than the desire to reduce defense expenditures, the now overwhelming American superiority in nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them. This superiority was the result of the Truman Administration's expansion of American military strength between 1950 and 1953. In 1950, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) could not have prevented the Soviets from occupying Western Europe. By 1954, with its fleet of B-47s, its overseas bases, its large stockpile of improved fission bombs, and the increased readiness and competence of its crews, it could

^{1/} Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960) 10.

^{2/} Department of State Bulletin, January 25, 1954, pp. 107-109.

have effectively destroyed the Soviet Union with little likelihood of serious reprisal against the United States.^{1/} The years of the "New Look" were the high-water mark of relative American nuclear military strength in the Cold War.

In the months that followed Secretary Dulles' speech, Administration spokesmen undertook to clarify his statement, which had aroused considerable speculation as to whether it was the Government's policy to rely solely on nuclear weapons in dealing with any emergency, large or small. In March, 1954, Secretary Dulles told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

In organizing their collective defense, the free nations should not attempt to match the Soviet bloc man for man and gun for gun. The best way to deter aggressions is to make the aggressor know in advance that he will suffer damage outweighing what he can hope to gain. Thus, an aggressor must not be able to count upon a sanctuary status for those resources which he does not use in committing aggression. The greatest deterrent to war is the ability of the free world to respond by means best suited to the particular area and circumstances. There should be a capacity--I emphasize the word "capacity"--for massive retaliation without delay. I point out that the possession of that capacity does not impose the necessity of using it in every instance of attack. It is not our intention to turn every local war into a general war.^{2/}

^{1/} Developments in Military Technology and Their Impact on United States Strategy and Foreign Policy (Washington Center for Foreign Policy Research, John Hopkins Univ., 1959), pp. 46ff; James E. King, Jr., "Collective Defense: The Military Commitment," in Arnold Wolfers, editor, Alliance Policy in the Cold War (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959), pp. 119-121.

^{2/} Hearings, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 83rd Congress, 2d session, March 19, 1954, pp. 4-5, 29-30.

Despite these statements of qualification, however, the policy of "massive retaliation" served to warn our Communist foes that if there were a new aggression like that in Korea, or if the Korean War itself were resumed, the United States would not feel bound again to the nonuse of nuclear weapons. Included with that warning was the further admonition that use of nuclear weapons meant strategic use against the homelands of the major offending powers. The doctrine reflected the view that nuclear weapons could deter any kind of war in which there was even a possibility of their being used, and that the United States could and would feel quite uninhibited about using them where it felt its interests were sufficiently involved.

The ambiguous policy of "massive retaliation", the declaration that we might respond by the use of nuclear weapons to nonnuclear aggression directed at places other than Western Europe and the United States remained the policy of the Eisenhower Administration throughout its tenure in office. Indeed, several times during this period, the Administration threatened the use of nuclear weapons to attain foreign policy objectives. In 1953, the Chinese Communists were warned that nuclear weapons might be used if they did not terminate the Korean War. This warning was accompanied by the deployment of missiles to Okinawa capable of delivering nuclear warheads to Chinese targets. ^{1/}

^{1/} John Robinson Beal, John Forster Dulles: A Biography (New York: Harper and Brother, 1957), pp. 181-182.

In the same year, the U. S. Government proposed air strikes, both conventional and nuclear, either on the Viet Minh forces surrounding Dienbienphu or on the border provinces of China.^{1/} These proposals apparently were rejected by the French. In the 1954-1955 Chinese Communist shelling of Quemoy, the President requested and received from Congress authority to defend these islands if the threat to them embodied a threat to Taiwan.^{2/} In the 1958 Quemoy crisis, atomic-capable eight-inch artillery was deployed to the island amid open discussion of nuclear air strikes against China.^{3/}

The attempt to utilize nuclear power to deter lesser as well as major aggression began to be undermined, however, as the Soviet Union began to develop its own substantial nuclear delivery capabilities in jet bombers and ballistic missiles and as both sides developed significant stockpiles of thermonuclear (hydrogen) weapons. In 1959 and 1960 the United States continued to be superior in long-range bombers, but the Soviets were probably ahead in deploying operational long-range missiles.

^{1/} Roscoe Drummond and Gaston Coblentz, Duel at the Brink (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960), pp. 121-122.

^{2/} Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), p. 467; Chalmers Roberts, "The Day We Didn't Go to War," The Reporter, xi (September 14, 1954), pp. 3132.

^{3/} Hanson W. Baldwin, "Limited War," The Atlantic Monthly, cciii (May, 1959), pp. 35-43.

Indeed, in the 1956 Suez invasion by Great Britain and France, it was the Soviet Union that threatened to bring its medium-range atomic missiles to bear if the invasion did not cease. This threat led to a responsive American alerting of the Strategic Air Command and deployment of bombers to forward bases.^{1/}

Thus, by this time, a key element of the New Look had been undermined. As long as each major power had the ability to devastate the other, it would be in the interests of neither to use its strategic nuclear forces in response to a small-scale attack. The threat to use a strategic nuclear forces lost credibility as a deterrent to local nonnuclear aggression in areas outside Western Europe and the United States. Massive retaliation had become a two-way street.^{2/}

The nuclear strategy of the Kennedy Administration, and of subsequent administrations, recognized the growing Soviet capability and put less emphasis on the first use of strategic nuclear weapons, although such first use was not renounced. The Kennedy strategy, which was in effect adopted by subsequent administration, called for a "flexible response" to Soviet aggression. A U.S. second-strike nuclear capability

^{1/} George H. Quester, Nuclear Diplomacy: The First Twenty-Five Years (New York: The Dunellen Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 124, 142-143.

^{2/} Samuel P. Huntington, The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 89-92.

was to be built and maintained as a deterrent to nuclear war. Additional ground forces would be maintained as a deterrent to smaller, non-nuclear wars.

In his budget recommendation to Congress, President Kennedy stated his policy as follows:

Our strategic arms and defenses must be adequate to deter any deliberate nuclear attack on the United States or our allies--by making clear to any potential aggressor that sufficient retaliatory forces will be able to survive a first strike and penetrate his defenses in order to inflict unacceptable losses upon him....

Our defense posture must be both flexible and determined. Any potential aggressor contemplating an attack on any part of the free world with any kind of weapons, conventional or nuclear, must know that our response will be suitable, selective, swift, and effective....

We intend to have at all times the capacity to resist non-nuclear or limited attacks--as a complement to our nuclear capacity, not as a substitute. We have rejected any all-or-nothing posture which would leave no choice but inglorious retreat or unlimited retaliation....^{1/}

Kennedy used the threat of U. S. massive retaliatory power, however, during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, when he announced that, if a nuclear missile were launched from Cuba, the U. S. would initiate "a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union."^{2/}

^{1/} The President of the United States, Recommendations Relating to Our Defense Budget (Washington, D. C.: General Printing Office, 1961), House Doc. No. 123, pp. 3-4; also Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1962, p. 10.

^{2/} Address by President Kennedy, October 22, 1962, Department of State Bulletin, xlvii (November 12, 1962), pp. 715-22.

Subsequent administrations have adhered to the strategy of "flexible response," "mutual deterrence," or "second-strike" capability in regard to the strategic use of nuclear weapons. While the first use of strategic nuclear weapons was not renounced, it became a more remote possibility because of the likelihood of nuclear response by the enemy.

Most serious questions on strategic nuclear strategy since the early 1960s have centered on the question of how large a strategic retaliatory force and what combination of weapons systems would be needed in order to deter the Soviet Union successfully, or if deterrence failed, to strike back decisively. This debate has ranged from the policy of "superiority" of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations to the "nuclear sufficiency" of the Nixon Administration to the "essential equivalence" of the Ford Administration.

In summary, the possible first-use of strategic nuclear weapons has been an important and consistent element of American deterrence since the development of such weapons. However, the credibility of strategic first-use of these weapons, especially against the Soviet Union, had declined as the Soviets developed their own capability of initiating or responding to nuclear war. Thus, first-use remains an American strategic option, but a rather remote strategic option. The most recent statement of this policy was made by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger on July 6, 1975:

There is a residual possibility that in the event of major aggression against the United States and its allies that the United States may have to employ nuclear weapons, but the thrust of our policy has been in the other direction, to attempt to raise the nuclear threshold rather than to lower it.... Nuclear weapons would be employed only in cases of outright aggression where circumstances were indeed so desperate that there seemed to be no other alternative.^{1/}

^{1/} ABC News Issues and Answers, July 6, 1975, pp. 3, 12-13.

III. COUNTERFORCE^{1/}

During the period of the 1950s, when the United States possessed, first, a monopoly of strategic nuclear delivery systems and, later, when we possessed a vast superiority in these weapons, our nuclear retaliatory policy, although not explicitly stated as such, was a "counterforce" (or damage limiting) policy. Our nuclear superiority allowed us to target Soviet ground forces, nuclear attack forces, and nuclear weapons manufacturing capabilities in order to limit damage to ourselves and our allies.

The comparative simplicity of a counterforce strategy in a period of vast American nuclear superiority soon dissolved, however, as both the U.S. and the Soviet Union acquired larger, more diversified, and less vulnerable nuclear strike forces. As the probability receded that this country could eradicate all or most enemy offensive forces simultaneously, U.S. nuclear deterrence was based on a new strategic doctrine of a "countervalue" nuclear response to any enemy attack. In essence, this doctrine required that our nuclear retaliatory forces would be targeted to destroy enemy population centers, industries, resources and institutions which constitute the fabric of a

^{1/} For a more detailed discussion of the counterforce concept, see John M. Collins, Counterforce and Countervalue Options Compared: A Military Analysis Related to Nuclear Deterrence, Congressional Research Service 72-240A, December 7, 1972.

society. Thus, an enemy attack on the United States and its allies would be deterred by the sure knowledge that the attacking nation would suffer retaliatory destruction on a scale approaching national ruin. This strategy, labeled the "delicate balance of terror," became known as "assured destruction" and still serves as the basis for our nuclear deterrence strategy.

In the early 1960s, however, Secretary of Defense McNamara revived the "counterforce" strategy as a national strategic option other than mutual assured destruction by the two nuclear superpowers. McNamara argued that our strategic nuclear forces should again have the capability of striking enemy strategic military targets rather than his cities. The advantages of this strategy at this time, it was argued, were that it would serve as a deterrent to attacks on American cities, it would provide a means of retaliating in ways other than by a massive attack against civilians and would make our deterrence more credible. For example, it seemed less than credible to our NATO allies that a Soviet attack on one or more of them without a direct attack on the U. S. would necessarily be followed by a U. S. strike against Soviet cities, thus subjecting our own cities to destruction by a Communist second-strike. A "counterforce" strategy, it was argued, would thus provide for a flexible and controlled strategic response to nuclear provocation or limited attacks without the total destruction of a "countervalue" strategic response.

This strategy was given its first major official exposition by Secretary of Defense McNamara at the NATO Minister's meeting in Athens in the spring of 1962. A few weeks later he gave a public version of his views in a commencement speech at Ann Arbor, Michigan:

The U.S. has come to the conclusion that to the extent feasible, basic military strategy in a possible nuclear war should be approached in much the same way that more conventional military operations have been regarded in the past. That is to say, principal military objectives, in the event of a nuclear war stemming from a major attack on the Alliance, should be the destruction of the enemy's military forces, not of his civilian population.

The very strength and nature of the Alliance forces make it possible for us to retain, even in the face of massive surprise attack, sufficient reserve striking power to destroy an enemy society if driven to it. In other words, we are giving a possible opponent the strongest imaginable incentive to refrain from striking our own cities....

We believe that the combination of our nuclear strength and a strategy of controlled response gives us some hope of minimizing damage....^{1/}

Mr. McNamara expanded on his concepts in his testimony before Congress in the spring of 1963:

What we are proposing is a capability to strike back after absorbing the first blow. This means we have to build and maintain a second strike force. Such a force should have sufficient flexibility to permit a choice of strategies, particularly an ability to: (1) strike back decisively at the entire Soviet target system simultaneously, or (2) strike back first at the Soviet bomber bases, missile sites, and other military installations associated with their long range nuclear forces to reduce the power of any follow-on attack--

^{1/} Robert McNamara, "Address at the Commencement Exercises, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, June 16, 1962, "Department of State Bulletin."

and if necessary, strike back at the Soviet urban and industrial complex in a controlled and deliberate way.

By building into our forces a flexible capability, we at least eliminate the prospect that we could strike back in only one way, namely against the entire Soviet target system, including their cities. Such a prospect would give the Soviet Union no incentive to withhold attack against our cities in a first strike. We want to give them a better alternative. Whether they would accept it in the crisis of a global nuclear war, no one can say. Considering what is at stake, we believe it is worth the additional effort on our part to have this option.^{1/}

The McNamara "counterforce" or "controlled response" strategy evoked criticism on a number of grounds. First, it was apparent that this strategy could be interpreted as a disarming first strike capability against Soviet strategic forces despite administration protestations that this strategy would be employed only in the context of similar Soviet attacks on American strategic installations. A second criticism was that this strategy made nuclear war more likely in two ways: (1) an apparent U. S. ability to disarm Russian bomber and missile forces might make the Soviet leadership tense and trigger happy, thus increasing the likelihood of mutually unwanted war; and (2) by reducing the expected damage in any nuclear exchange, this strategy could make nuclear war more likely. An obvious loophole in the strategy was illustrated by the

^{1/} U. S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964. Hearings, 88th Congress, 1st session, Part I. pp. 111-112.

deployment of B-47 aircraft to civilian airfields during the Cuba missile crisis, thus denying the Soviets a "counterforce option."^{1/}

In any event, it was clear that this strategy required larger and more accurate strategic nuclear delivery systems than did a second strike strategy. It was also clear that, in addition to a "counterforce" capability, a "countervalue" capability also had to be maintained. "Counterforce" was an option in addition to, not in place of, "assured destruction." As Secretary McNamara explained it:

A 'damage-limiting' strategy appears to be the most practical and effective course for us to follow. Such a strategy requires a force considerably larger than would be needed for a limited 'cities only' strategy. While there are still some differences of judgment on just how large such a force should be, there is general agreement that it should be large enough to ensure the destruction, singly or in combination, of the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the Communist satellites as national societies, under the worst possible circumstances of war outbreak that can reasonably be postulated, and, in addition, to destroy their warmaking capability so as to limit, to the extent practicable, damage to this country and to our allies.^{2/}

Because of the additional expense of adding a "counterforce" capability to the U.S. strategic arsenal, McNamara soon reversed his field and embraced

^{1/} For criticism and defense of the counterforce strategy, see Michael Brower, "Controlled Thermonuclear War," The New Republic, July 30, 1962; Morton H. Halperin, "The No-Cities' Doctrine," The New Republic, October 8, 1962.

^{2/} U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Military Posture and H.R. 9637 (No. 36). Hearings, 88th Congress, 2nd session, pp. 6919-21.

traditional nuclear concepts of mutual deterrence through assured destruction. The strategy of counterforce was rejected by McNamara for additional reasons, which were summarized in his 1968 Defense Posture statement:

1. A credible first strike capability was impossible to attain, even if it were desirable.
2. Deterrence depends on the "ability to destroy the attacker as a viable 20th century nation, . . . and not the ability partially to limit damage to ourselves."
3. "It makes sense for us both (the U.S. and USSR) to try to halt the momentum of the arms race."^{1/}

The "counterforce" strategy was next advocated by President Nixon, although not labeled as such, in his annual foreign policy statement in 1972. The President stated:

Our forces must be maintained at a level sufficient to make it clear that even an all-out surprise attack on the United States by the USSR would not cripple our capability to retaliate. Our forces must also be capable of flexible application. A simple "assured destruction" doctrine does not meet our present requirements for a flexible range of strategic options. No President should be left with only one strategic course of action, particularly that of ordering the mass destruction of enemy civilians and facilities. Given the range of possible political-military situations which could conceivably confront us, our strategic policy should not be based solely on a capability of inflicting urban and industrial damage presumed to be beyond the level an adversary would accept. We must be able to respond at levels appropriate to the situation. This problem will be the subject of continuing study.^{2/}

^{1/} McNamara, Robert S. Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the FY 1969-73 Defense Program and 1969 Defense Budget, p. 46-47, 53.

^{2/} Richard M. Nixon, U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s: The Emerging Structure of Peace, A Report to the Congress, February 9, 1972, p. 158.

This further study produced no recommendations for new or additional weapons systems to implement such a strategy, however.

In a speech to the Overseas Winters Association on January 10, 1974, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger reopened the debate on "counterforce" strategy by announcing that "there has taken place . . . a change in the strategies of the United States with regard to the hypothetical employment of central strategic forces. A change in targeting strategy as it were."

Schlesinger went on to explain this strategy:

The main point that should be understood is that both sides now have, and will continue to have, invulnerable second-strike forces and that with those invulnerable second-strike forces it is inevitable, or virtually inevitable, that the employment by one side of its forces against the cities of the other side in an all-out strike will immediately bring a counterstrike against its own cities. Consequently, the range of circumstances in which an all-out strike against an opponent's cities can be contemplated has narrowed considerably and one wishes to have alternatives for the employment of strategic forces other than what would be for the party initiating a suicidal strike against the cities of the other side. . . .

Now, what I was referring to is a set of selective options against different sets of targets. We would not necessarily specify any particular set of targets. Military targets, whether silos or other military targets, are, of course, one of the possible targets. But it is necessary to maintain a set of options which goes beyond the inherent attack -- all-out-attack -- against enemy cities in the event of nuclear exchanges.^{1/}

^{1/} Remarks by Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, Overseas Writers Association Luncheon, January 10, 1974, pp. 5-6.

In terms reminiscent of McNamara, Secretary Schlesinger, in his posture statement to Congress in February, 1974, elaborated his strategy in terms of giving the President additional options for the first use of nuclear weapons:

If anything, the need for options other than suicide or surrender, or other than escalation to all out nuclear war, is more important for us today than it was in 1960, because of the growth of the capabilities possessed by other powers.

The Soviet Union now has the capability in its missile forces to undertake selective attacks against targets other than cities. This poses for us an obligation, if we are to ensure the credibility of our strategic deterrent to be certain that we have a comparable capability in our strategic systems and in our targeting doctrine, and to be certain that the USSR has no misunderstanding on this point.

Rather than massive options, we now want to provide the President with a wider set of much more selective targeting options. Through possession of such a visible capability, we hope to reinforce deterrence by removing the temptation for an adversary to consider any kind of nuclear attack....

But if, for whatever reason, deterrence should fail, we want to have the planning flexibility to be able to respond selectively to the attack in such a way as to (1) limit the chances of uncontrolled escalation, and (2) hit meaningful targets and with a sufficient accuracy-yield combination to destroy only the intended target and to avoid widespread collateral damage. If a nuclear clash should occur--and we fervently believe that it will not--in order to protect American cities and the cities of our allies, we shall rely into the wartime period upon reserving our 'assured destruction' force and persuading, through intrawar deterrence, any potential foe not to attack cities. It is through these means that we hope to prevent massive destruction even in the cataclysmic circumstances of nuclear war.^{1/}

^{1/} Fiscal Year 1975 Authorization, Part I, Hearings, Committee on Armed Services, Senate, 93rd Congress, 2d session, February 5, 1974, pp. 39-40.

Schlesinger based the United States' need for a counterforce capability on the fact that the Soviet Union was proceeding to develop such a capability:

... As long as the Soviets continue to press ahead with the acquisition of their new weaponry, the United States will not permit itself to be unilaterally put in a secondary position with regard to counterforce capabilities.^{1/}

The advantages of this counterforce option were said to be that it serves as a deterrent to attacks on the cities of the U.S. and its allies, provides a means of retaliating in other ways than by a massive attack against cities, thus enhancing the credibility of our deterrent force, provides for limited countermeasures for accidents, theft, other acts involving nuclear weapons, or threats from intermediate and variable range nuclear systems, thus giving the President more than the simple response of a limited or wholesale destruction of cities. Criticisms of this "new" strategy parallel those made in 1962.^{2/}

Response options would be enhanced, Schlesingersaid, by increased accuracy, greater flexibility in the yields of nuclear weapons available, and improved capability for rapid retargeting. Thus, research and development funds

^{1/} Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger before Godfrey Sperling Group, July 1, 1975, p. 4.

^{2/} George C. Wilson, "Newest Strategy for Nuclear War," The Washington Post, July 20, 1975, p. C-1.

to develop these capabilities were requested. In fiscal year 1975, Congress approved funds for research and development of this option. However, it was indicated that, with respect to this program, "the line of demarcation between research and development and production is clearly defined."

IV. TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Department of the Army has defined tactical nuclear warfare as "a conflict between the land forces and associated naval and air forces of two or more nations in which nuclear weapons are limited to the defeat of opposing forces in a theater of operations. Implicit in this definition is the condition that a strategic nuclear exchange on the belligerent's homeland does not occur."^{1/}

General Omar Bradley, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had as early as 1949 urged the development and acquisition of tactical nuclear weapons on the assumption that their use would increase the firepower of Western forces and, therefore, presumably balance the superior numbers of the Russian Army.^{2/} Bradley's article, published at almost the same time as the first Soviet nuclear test, expressed doubts that nuclear weapons could be decisive in any strategic sense, and argued that their very best use was directly on the battlefield, to win the military victory.

The previous summer, a group of scientists, during a series of conferences known as "Project Vista" held at the California Institute of Technology, had presented strong recommendations for tactical nuclear weapons development.^{3/} A series of nuclear weapons tests in 1951 demonstrated

^{1/} Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-30 (Test), Tactical Nuclear Operations, (August 1971), p. 2-1.

^{2/} Omar Bradley, "This Way Lies Peace," The Saturday Evening Post, ccxxvii (October 15, 1949), pp. 32-33.

^{3/} James R. Shepley and Clay Blair, The Hydrogen Bomb (New York: David McKay, 1954) pp. 176-182; Charles J. V. Murphy, "The Hidden Struggle for the A Bomb," Fortune, xlvii (May 1953), p. 17.

the feasibility of making sub-kiloton weapons with small amounts of fissionable material, thus rebuffing the arguments of strategic warfare proponents that this scarce material should not be diverted from strategic weapons.^{1/}

Signals of a greater American (and NATO) reliance on tactical nuclear weapons, in lieu of larger conventional forces, were not long in coming. By April of 1953, provisions had been made for the first training of NATO officers in the handling and use of tactical atomic weapons.^{2/} In September of the same year, the first artillery capable of firing atomic shells, the large, unwieldy, 85-ton, 280-millimeter cannon, was deployed to Europe, to be followed in 1954 by short-range Regulus and Honest John missiles which could carry more fully developed nuclear warheads.^{3/} In the fall of 1953, appropriations for expansion of conventional army units were canceled and these forces were later reduced drastically, reflecting the decision to place increased reliance on the use of tactical atomic weapons.^{4/} In October 1953, President Eisenhower approved a National Security Council recommendation that the Joint Chiefs of Staff base their plans on employing tactical nuclear weapons to counter conventional attacks whenever it was deemed militarily advantageous to do so. The President stated, "Where these things are used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you

1/ Quester, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

2/ *New York Times*, May 29, 1953, p. 6, col. 2.

3/ Robert Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 107.

4/ Huntington, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

would use a bullet or anything else." ^{1/} In December of that year, Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, indicated, "Today, atomic weapons have virtually achieved conventional status within our Armed Forces." ^{2/} In January 1954, Secretary Dulles delivered his "massive retaliation" speech. Thus, "first use" of atomic weapons, both strategic and tactical, was confirmed as the American military policy.

The decision to rely on the use of tactical nuclear weapons rather than the more costly conventional forces for national defense was stimulated in no small part by the bitter and frustrating experience of U.S. conventional arms in Korea and by the failure of Western European allies to meet the conventional force goal of 96 divisions agreed upon at the Lisbon Conference in 1952. It was, moreover, in keeping with the long-standing U.S. tradition of trading technology for manpower.

This policy was as popular in Congress as it was in the Administration and in Europe. Thus, the Senate report on the 1954 amendments to the Atomic Energy Act (which authorized release of information on weapons characteristics, effects, and delivery systems to our European allies) stated flatly:

America's preponderance in atomic weapons can offset the numerical superiority of the Communist forces and serve emphatic notice on the Soviet dictators that any attempt to occupy free Europe or to push further anywhere into the Free World would be foredoomed to failure. ^{3/}

The North Atlantic Council, at its meeting in December 1954, authorized NATO's military commanders to devise their strategic plans on the basis of using nuclear weapons, whether the aggressor used them or not,

^{1/} Department of State Bulletin, v. 32, March 21, 1955, pp. 459-60.

^{2/} New York Times, December 15, 1953, p. 31.

^{3/} Atomic Energy Commission, Legislative History of the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, Vol. I, pp. 750-51.

thus hoping, like the Americans, to avoid the more onerous burdens of high military expenditures and long conscription periods.^{1/} In a widely quoted lecture, Field Marshal Montgomery, the Deputy Supreme Commander, stated the new NATO military strategy:

I want to make it absolutely clear that we at . . . are basing all our operational planning on using atomic and thermonuclear weapons in our own defense. With us it is no longer: "They may possibly be used." It is very definitely: "They will be used, if we are attacked." In fact, we have reached the point of no return as regards to the use of atomic and thermonuclear weapons in a hot war.^{2/}

During this period, the use of tactical nuclear weapons was not generally visualized apart from strategic nuclear war. Under the doctrine of massive retaliation, U.S. ground forces and those of our allies would serve merely as a "tripwire." Attacks against this small symbolic force would trigger a massive nuclear response; tactical nuclear weapons were seen as being used in a mop-up action after a strategic nuclear exchange.^{3/}

The strategy of flexible response initiated by President Kennedy in light of the waning credibility of a U.S. strategic nuclear response to an invasion of Western Europe, provided for gradual augmentation of NATO ground forces so that a substantially nonnuclear defense of Europe would become a possibility. Tactical nuclear weapons, although still the option of last resort, were seen as a hedge against the collapse of a conventional defense rather than as NATO's first and only response to attack.

1/ New York Times, December 15, 1954, p. 8; December 18, pp. 1-2.

2/ Journal of the Royal United Service Institute, xcix November 1954, p. 509; New York Times, November 30, 1954. p. 13.

3/ Dennis M. Gormley, "NATO's Tactical Nuclear Option: Past, Present, and Future," Military Review, vol. 53 (September 1973), p. 5.

Both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations held that even small tactical nuclear weapons were "extremely destructive devices and hardly the preferred weapons to defend such heavily populated areas as Europe" and, further that they could not meaningfully be substituted for conventional forces.^{1/} Both also subscribed heartily to the so-called firebreak theory that held that the wartime detonation of any nuclear device would lead to a strategic exchange, and, therefore, that the real threshold in escalation lay not between the use of tactical nuclear weapons and strategic weapons but rather between conventional warfare and nuclear warfare. Kennedy stated that "inevitably the use of small nuclear armaments will lead to larger and larger nuclear armaments on both sides, until the world-wide holocaust has begun."^{2/}

The conditions under which tactical nuclear weapons might be employed first by the U.S. were thus restricted to situations in which "any attack by conventional forces puts Europe in danger of being overrun."^{3/}

The Kennedy Administration thus developed a strategic "pause" doctrine. In effect, this doctrine stated that some time would be allowed to elapse, or some marginal stretch of territory be lost, before tactical nuclear weapons were introduced in any local war in Europe.^{4/} The "pause", then, was a simple reassertion of American first-use policy in

^{1/} Testimony of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 88th Cong., 1st Session (1963), pt. 1, p. 102.

^{2/} John F. Kennedy, The Strategy of Peace (New York: Harper, 1960), p. 185.

^{3/} Testimony of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, op. cit.

^{4/} James L. Richardson, Germany and the Atlantic Alliance (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 74-77.

a slightly more rational and credible form than massive retaliation. If provision for an adequate conventional defense could indeed be made, the "pause" doctrine provided the vehicle for a transition to such a nonnuclear defense.

There was a brief flurry of public discussion concerning the first use of tactical nuclear weapons issue during the Presidential campaign of 1964. At a press conference in Hartford, Connecticut on October 24, 1963, Senator Barry Goldwater was questioned on his reaction to a recent statement of Dwight D. Eisenhower that America's six NATO divisions in Europe could be cut to one. Answering the question, Goldwater observed that the six divisions could "probably" be cut by "at least one third" if NATO "commanders" in Europe had the power to use tactical nuclear weapons on their own initiative in an emergency.^{1/} Goldwater later introduced the term "conventional nuclear weapons." He was attacked on both fronts in the Presidential campaign. Lyndon Johnson replied as follows:

Make no mistake. There is no such things as a conventional nuclear weapon. For nineteen peril-filled years, no nation has loosed the atom against another. To do so now is a political decision of the highest order, and it would lead us down an uncertain path of blows and counterblows whose outcome none may know. No President of the United States of America can divest himself of the responsibility for such a decision.^{2/}

The debate during the campaign stressed Presidential control over nuclear weapons, therefore, and was not a debate concerning the first use or non-first use of tactical nuclear weapons.

^{1/} Theodore H. White, The Making of the President, 1964 (New York: Signet Books, 1965), p. 353.

^{2/} New York Times, September 8, 1964, p. 18.

In December 1967, the NATO Defense Planning Committee formally adopted a revised strategic concept which was based upon "a flexible and balanced range of appropriate responses, conventional and nuclear, to all levels of aggression or threats of aggression."^{1/} This strategy replaced the old concept of reliance on the use of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons from the outset of any aggression and indicated, ostensibly, that the U.S. had convinced its NATO allies that defending conventionally in Europe against Soviet nonnuclear aggression was, under some circumstances, not an unreasonable task.

The Nixon Administration revised the strategy of "flexible response" by again giving weight to the traditional option of responding to a Warsaw Pact nonnuclear attack with nuclear weapons. The President stated:

... having a full range of options does not mean we will necessarily limit our response to the level or intensity chosen by an enemy.^{2/}

Secretary of Defense Laird stated the strategy as follows:

Our theater and tactical nuclear weapons add to the realism of deterrence of theater conventional wars in Europe and Asia; the Soviets and Chinese Communists cannot be sure that major conventional aggression would not be met with the tactical use of nuclear weapons. In other words, we plan to maintain tactical nuclear capabilities that contribute to realistic deterrence while allowing for maximum flexibility of response in every major contingency we plan for should deterrence fail.^{3/}

^{1/} Text of Final Communiqués Issued by Ministerial Sessions of the North Atlantic Council, the Defense Planning Committee and Nuclear Group, 1949-1970 (Brussels: NATO, 1971), p. 187.

^{2/} Richard Nixon, U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: Building for Peace (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 149.

^{3/} Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird on the Fiscal Year 1972-76 Defense Program and the 1972 Defense Budget, March 15, 1971, pp. 75-76.

Laird also made explicit the policy of first use of tactical nuclear weapons as a response to Chinese aggression:

In Asia, our continuing nuclear superiority vis-a-vis the Chinese can contribute significantly to deterrence of Chinese nuclear attacks, or conventional attacks, on our Asian allies.^{1/}

In his posture statement for 1974, Secretary of Defense Schlesinger although stressing the need for adequate conventional forces, restated the policy that the U.S. continued to retain the option of a first use of tactical nuclear weapons in order to prevent successful aggression. After discussing the complexities of tactical nuclear warfare, Schlesinger indicated that a large and diversified tactical nuclear capability was necessary for the following reasons:

First, maintaining these capabilities is essential to deterrence so long as opposing forces maintain similar capabilities. They help to deter a limited first-use of nuclear weapons by an opponent and along with the conventional and nuclear forces help create a general deterrent against either conventional or nuclear aggression. Second, should deterrence fail, the tactical nuclear capabilities provide a source of nuclear options for defense other than the use of the strategic forces. Third, given our doctrine of flexible response, we do not preclude the use of nuclear weapons by the United States and its allies in order to prevent a successful aggression.^{2/}

Schlesinger in his 1975 posture statement continued to stress the desirability of a conventional defense of Europe, while reserving tactical nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war, to be used as required if conventional defense fails:

^{1/} Ibid., pp. 16-17.

^{2/} Statement of Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, Hearing, Fiscal Year 1975 Authorization for Military Procurement, etc., Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 93rd Congress, 2d Session, February 5, 1974, p. 80.

In an age of essential nuclear parity, few of us would be happy with a concept for the defense of Western Europe that was heavily dependent on an early recourse to nuclear weapons. Most of us would agree, once having looked at the facts, that a non-nuclear defense of Western Europe is feasible. It also is desirable, from the standpoint of deterrence, that such a defense should be backed up and reinforced at all times by theater nuclear forces. The existence of deployed conventional and theater nuclear forces in sufficient strength reduces whatever temptation there may be for the Warsaw Pact to probe the cohesion and determination of the Alliance.^{1/}

And in a television broadcast in July 1975, Schlesinger again made this first use of tactical nuclear weapons explicit:

Only in the case of major aggression in which there was the threat of the reality of the overwhelming of conventional forces would nuclear weapons have to be employed.^{2/}

In summary, the first use of tactical nuclear weapons has been a consistent American strategy since the development of these weapons in the early 1950s. Tactical nuclear weapons are seen, both by the United States and the nations of Western Europe, as a substitute for conventional ground forces and as a counterweight to Soviet and Warsaw Pact numerical superiority.

^{1/} Hearing, Fiscal Year 1976 and July-September 1976 Transition Period Authorization for Military Procurement, etc., Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 94th Congress, 1st Session, February 5, 1975, p. 39.

^{2/} ABC News Issues and Answers, July 6, 1975, p. 6.

V. FIRST STRIKE

As previously indicated, it has never been American policy to plan for or develop forces capable of a disarming first strike against the Soviet Union. However, with the development of atomic mass destruction weapons and with the growth of a Communist Soviet Union ideologically dedicated to the defeat of capitalism, preventive or preemptive war has, at times, seemed attractive to certain elements of American society.

There was some talk of such a first strike in the period of American nuclear monopoly immediately following World War II, in order to preclude what was seen as inevitable Soviet development of an atomic capability. These views were commonly coupled with extreme anti-Communist ideological views to produce a crusading fervor which advocated unrestrained or aggressive use of nuclear power in a moral attack against Communism in all its forms wherever it appeared.^{1/}

Major General Orville A. Anderson was a major proponent of this view in the early postwar years. The basic question, as he phrased it was:

Which is the greater immorality--preventive war as a means to keep the U.S.S.R. from becoming a nuclear power; or, to allow a totalitarian dictatorial system to develop a means whereby the free world could be intimidated, blackmailed, and possibly destroyed?^{2/}

^{1/} According to Francois Mauriac, Mrs. Claire Booth Luce, on November 12, 1949, "tried us out on the preventive application of the atomic bomb." The Times Literary Supplement, March 20, 1953.

^{2/} Quoted in General Nathan F. Twining Neither Liberty nor Safety (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 19.

General Anderson was convinced that the greater immorality lay in our decision to permit the development of a militant system of power capable of destroying the Free World. He regarded the "immorality" of a preventive strike against the U.S.S.R. as the lesser of two moral evils.

Aside from the moral issue, however, in the period of U.S. nuclear monopoly, a Soviet deterrent to any nuclear assault on the Soviet Union existed in the vulnerability of Western Europe to Soviet ground occupation. It was not widely expected that the Russians would surrender, even if their cities were being regularly hit by nuclear weapons, as long as they could install themselves in the cities of Western Europe.^{1/} Also, it was not believed that the Russians would be able to break the American nuclear monopoly for an extended period, so that a preventive war to keep the Soviets from acquiring this weapon seemed unnecessary.

After 1949, discussion of the preventive war alternative could not be easily postponed on optimistic estimates of Soviet nuclear incompetence. Hence the Soviet A-bomb test produced a small flurry of preventive war discussion, and the Korean War considerably more, in the fall of 1950 perhaps most memorably in a speech by Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews suggesting that Americans become the first "aggressors for peace."^{2/} But still the likely result of any American preemption would still have been a Soviet occupation of Europe. Again the nuclear question by itself could not be decisive.

^{1/} Quester, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

^{2/} Alfred Vagts, *Defense and Diplomacy* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1956), pp. 329-333.

Such wars, President Truman reiterated, were "the weapons of dictators, not of free democratic countries like the United States, coming only for defense against aggression." ^{1/}

In such preventive war discussions as emerged after the Korean War, the scenario thus was not so typically one of American nuclear weapons easily preempting and wiping out Soviet nuclear forces. ^{2/} Rather, the suggestion was for earlier initiation of the very long drawnout war that had been feared before, on the assumption that since it was likely to come anyway, it should better be fought before the "year of maximum risk."

There was a brief revival of discussion during the 1964 presidential campaign. The Republican candidate, Barry Goldwater, in urging the use of atomic bombs in Vietnam and a more bellicose policy toward Cuba and Russia, was perceived by his opponents and much of the public as advocating a first strike campaign against these nations. ^{3/} This view was reinforced, according to Theodore H. White, by some of Goldwater's previous writings which had advocated a more aggressive policy toward the Communists, even at the risk of nuclear war. ^{4/}

Goldwater's defeat in the election, together with the growth of a large and less vulnerable Soviet strategic nuclear capability eliminated most public discussion of an American first strike option.

^{1/} Speech of September 1, 1950.

^{2/} Vagts, op. cit., p. 333.

^{3/} White, op. cit., p. 387.

^{4/} White, op. cit., p. 358. See also Barry Goldwater, "A Foreign Policy for America," National Review, 10, no. 11 (March 25, 1961), pp. 177-181; Why Not Victory? (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962); Jack Bell, Mr. Conservative: Barry Goldwater (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 239-254.

The United States' position in this regard was most recently stated by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger in a press conference on July 1, 1975:

I do draw a distinction between first strike and first use in the case of the strategic forces because it is a relevant distinction as it applies to the strategic forces....

What the United States Government has said of late is that neither side can acquire a disarming first strike capability. That the nuclear forces of both superpowers are so extensive that irrespective of the deployments of additional forces for the foreseeable future, neither side could hope to eliminate the retaliatory capability of the other side against its own cities. So there is no possibility, as we would see it, of a disarming first strike....

We cannot obtain it, the Soviets cannot obtain it, for the foreseeable future and as long as both sides are intelligent about their deployment, neither side can obtain a disarming first strike so it's not feasible and in addition, we have indicated that we do not desire ourselves or the Soviets to achieve a disarming first strike. Now that does not mean that we will declare against the first use of strategic weapons.1/

1/ Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger before Godfrey Sperling Group, July 1, 1975, pp. 3-4.

VI. ARMS LIMITATION

Although the United States has never declared against first use of nuclear weapons, it has constantly sought international agreements, with proper controls and verification, to limit the use, proliferation, testing, and size of inventory of these weapons. After World War II, the U.S., in the so-called Baruch Plan, dramatically offered to turn over its scientific know-how and atomic energy facilities to an international atomic development authority and to destroy its stockpile of atomic bombs once an adequate control system became fully effective. Under the Baruch plan, the international authority would have had exclusive control and ownership of all potentially dangerous atomic energy activities and the power to control, inspect and license all other atomic activities. In effect, the plan would have created a limited world government and an open scientific community. Atomic weapons technology would have been frozen at World War II levels, and no nation could have mounted a surprise attack.^{1/}

Despite the willingness of the U.S. to surrender its monopoly of the bomb, the Russians rejected the offer, and offered a counterproposal. The Russian plan called simply for a ban on the use or manufacture of nuclear weapons under any circumstances and for the destruction of existing stockpiles of weapons, without any serious system of inspection or surveillance to monitor or induce compliance.^{2/} This plan, of course, was not acceptable to the United States.

^{1/} Richard Hewlett and Oscar Anderson, The New World: 1939-1946 (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), pp. 531-619; also P. M. S. Blackett, Fear, War and the Bomb (New York: McGraw Hill, 1948), pp. 143-94.

^{2/} U.S. Department of State, Documents on Disarmament 1945-1949 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 17-24.

These became the main lines of the U.S. and Soviet approaches to disarmament in subsequent years. The U.S. insisted that the first step toward disarmament should be the establishment of an effective control system, followed by the destruction of conventional armaments (of which the Soviet Union had a preponderance), followed in the final stage by the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Russians wanted the reverse: first, elimination of nuclear weapons (in which the U.S. had a long lead), followed by conventional disarmament, and lastly, a control system which amounted to "self-control". The Soviet Union's plan, like the U.S. one, was carefully calculated to maximize its own security. It followed that neither country found the other's proposals acceptable.

Soviet pressure to renounce the first use of atomic weapons continued through the 1950s and 1960s during the period of U.S. nuclear predominance. The U.S. position was clearly stated by Dean Rusk in responding to a Soviet-inspired General Assembly Resolution of 1961 calling for a special conference for signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons for war purposes.^{1/} The Secretary stated:

While my Government deplores the necessity to arm with weapons of mass destruction, it believes that a prohibition on their use, unaccompanied by measures leading to the attainment of general and complete disarmament in a peaceful world, cannot provide any real or lasting protection to potential victims of nuclear attack. Indeed, a convention which would be merely an expression of the desire to eliminate nuclear weapons or prevent their spread would not in itself establish the conditions of confidence necessary for universal renunciation of such weapons. My Government

^{1/} General Assembly Resolution 1653, Documents on Disarmament, 1961 (Washington: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1963), pp. 648-650.

believes that the cause of disarmament cannot be advanced by the propagation of illusions about the ease with which it can be solved. There is no quick and easy road to disarmament. Its achievement will require the most devoted, constructive, patient, and realistic efforts. These efforts cannot be mobilized if the world becomes a victim of the illusion that disarmament can be accomplished by declaration without regard to the security concerns of states. Accordingly, in the judgment of my Government, as long as conditions for a successful conference do not exist, there is no point to holding such a conference.

The defense system of the United States and its allies, freely arrived at in accord with the United Nations Charter, includes nuclear weapons. This must continue to be the case as long as it is impossible to be certain through measures of verification that other states, which could use such weapons for aggressive purposes, do not retain a similar array of weapons in their national arsenals. The United States Government can and does offer the fullest assurances that it will never use any weapon, large or small, with aggressive intent. But the United States, like other free nations, must be fully prepared to exercise effectively the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense as provided in the United Nations Charter.

The Charter of the United Nations makes a distinction, not between one weapon and another, but between the use of force for aggression and for defense. This distinction is critical. It is the firm belief of the United States that the only sure way to eliminate the threat to mankind posed by nuclear weapons is to remove them from the arsenals of the nations through a programme of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.^{1/}

In recent years, as the Soviet Union approached parity in nuclear weapons with the United States, and as it appreciated the difficulties associated with its long frontier with China, pressures and interest in a declaration against first use waned and for all practical purposes disappeared. Efforts since that time have centered on international control of these weapons.

^{1/} Documents on Disarmament, 1962, p. 630.

Those efforts have achieved some success. In 1963, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States agreed to a limited ban on the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere.^{1/} By January of 1968, after prolonged negotiations, the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed on the terms of a nuclear nonproliferation treaty to be offered to all the other nations for their approval.^{2/} However, in its security assurances to nonnuclear signatories, the United States affirmed its right to assist these nations, utilizing nuclear weapons if necessary, if they should suffer aggression or be threatened with aggression with nuclear weapons. This position was affirmed by the Security Council resolution which provided similar assurances:

The Security Council...

1. Recognizes that aggression with nuclear weapons or the threat of such aggression against a non-nuclear-weapon State would create a situation in which the Security Council, and above all its nuclear-weapon State permanent members, would have to act immediately in accordance with their obligations under the United Nations Charter;

2. Welcomes the intention expressed by certain States that they will provide or support immediate assistance, in accordance with the Charter, to any non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that is a victim of an act or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used;

^{1/} Documents on Disarmament, 1963, pp. 291-293.

^{2/} Documents on Disarmament, 1968, pp. 1-6.

3. Reaffirms in particular the inherent right, recognized under Article 51 of the Charter, of individual and collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.^{1/}

Thus, in this instance, it can perhaps be said that the Security Council recognized the right of first use of nuclear weapons to support non-nuclear states threatened by nuclear aggression.

On two occasions, the United States has accepted some limited negotiated restriction on its right to use nuclear weapons to meet aggression. In the Treaty of Tlatelolco (Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America), the United States specifically undertook "not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Latin American states for which the treaty is in force."^{2/} In consenting to the notification of the protocol, the Senate qualified that commitment somewhat by stating that the U.S. Government "would have to consider that an armed attack by a Contracting Party, in which it was assisted by a nuclear-weapon state"^{3/} would invalidate the United States no first use pledge.

1/ Ibid.

2/ Congressional Record, April 14, 1971, p. S4782.

3/ Congressional Record, April 19, 1971, p. S5060. See also Additional Protocol II to the Latin American Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, Hearings, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 92nd Congress, 1st Session.

Subsequent to agreement on the first phase of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), the Soviet Union and the United States, on June 22, 1973 (during Brezhnev's visit to the United States) concluded an "Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War." In this agreement the two sides agreed to the following:

If at any time relations between the Parties or between either Party and other countries appear to involve the risk of a nuclear conflict, or if relations between countries not parties to this Agreement appear to involve the risk of nuclear war between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or between either Party and other countries, the United States and the Soviet Union, acting in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement, shall immediately enter into urgent consultations with each other and make every effort to avert this risk.^{1/}

Thus, while not renouncing the right to use nuclear weapons in its own defense, United States efforts to achieve international agreement on mutual restraint in the use of these weapons seemed, in the era of detente of the early 1970s, to be achieving some success.

^{1/} Department of State Bulletin, v. lxix, no. 1728, July 23, 1973, pp. 160-161.

VII. SUMMARY

Since the time of its use of nuclear weapons to end World War II to the present, the United States has consistently relied for deterrent purposes on the possibility of employing nuclear weapons. This policy was embodied in an explicit threat of "massive retaliation" at times and places of our own choosing.

As the Soviet Union achieved a nuclear capability, the threat of strategic nuclear retaliation became less credible, and the first use of strategic nuclear weapons by the United States became more remote. However, throughout this period, the United States has made it clear that its strategic forces are available for the protection of the United States and for its allies.

Tactical nuclear weapons have always been looked upon by the United States and its allies as a counterweight to large Communist ground forces, both in Europe and in Asia. NATO strategy from 1952 to 1967 postulated the almost immediate use of these weapons against Soviet aggression, whether nuclear or nonnuclear.

Again, however, the emphasis has shifted away from the immediate and automatic use of nuclear weapons towards increasing stress on a conventional nonnuclear defense. However, the first use of tactical nuclear weapons, when required to prevent aggression from succeeding, has been a consistent element of U.S. defense policy.

Secretary Schlesinger summarized this policy in a television broadcast on July 6, 1975:

I think that there has been no fundamental change in American strategy in that regard save that we have, over the past 15 years, steadily attempted to diminish the emphasis on the nuclear threat and on the first use of nuclear weapons....

We have tried to reduce the likelihood of that and to raise the nuclear threshold, but first use has been U. S. policy and we have been under pressure in the past from other countries to disavow the first use of nuclear weapons because it would undermine deterrence.

No administration has ever done that; no administration has seriously contemplated moving in that direction....

So the United States has consistently had a policy of refraining from disavowing first use.^{1/}

^{1/} ABC News Issues and Answers, July 6, 1975, pp. 3-5.

APPENDIX

STATEMENTS CONCERNING U.S.
NUCLEAR STRATEGY

With this bomb we have now added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction to supplement the growing power of our armed forces.

President Harry S. Truman announcing the use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima, August 6, 1945.

Now I believe that we are in a position where we will never have to make that decision again [to use the bomb], but if it has to be made for the welfare of the United States, and the democracies of the world are at stake, I wouldn't hesitate to make it again.

I hope and pray that that will never be necessary.

President Harry S. Truman, April 6, 1949.

The end of atomic secrecy is rapidly approaching, in the opinion of our most learned scientists in this field, although they estimate that it will be some time before any other nation will have the atomic bomb in sufficient quantities to risk its use. During that period our stockpile of these bombs, our capacity to produce more of them as quickly as possible, and the number and effectiveness of the aircraft required to deliver them on strategic targets will provide a large measure of security.

Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson,
Second Report of the Secretary of
Defense, December 30, 1949.

Strategic bombing has a high priority in our military planning, because we cannot hope to keep forces in being of sufficient size to meet Russia in the early stages of war. This is particularly true since we are never going to start the war, and the Soviet Union because of their peculiar governmental organization can choose the date of starting it. Lacking such forces in being, our greatest strength lies in the threat of quick retaliation in the event we are attacked.

General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, October, 1949.

[Reading] "Recent developments in Korea confront the world with a serious crisis."

THE PRESIDENT. We will take whatever steps are necessary to meet the military situation, just as we always have.

Q. Will that include the atomic bomb?

THE PRESIDENT. That includes every weapon that we have.

Q. Mr. President, you said "every weapon that have." Does that mean that there is active consideration of the use of the atomic bomb?

THE PRESIDENT. There has always been active consideration of its use. I don't want to see it used. It is a terrible weapon.

President Harry S. Truman, News Conference, November 30, 1950.

At the heart of the free world's defense is the military strength of the United States.

From 1945 to 1949, the United States was sole possessor of the atomic bomb. That was a great deterrent and protection in itself.

But when the Soviets produced an atomic explosion--as they were bound to do in time--we had to broaden the whole basis of our strength. We had to endeavor to keep our lead in atomic weapons. We must be prepared for war, because war may be thrust upon us.

We had no alternative, then, but to press on, to probe the secrets of atomic power to the uttermost of our capacity, to maintain, if we could, our initial superiority in the atomic field.

President Truman's State of the Union
Message to Congress, January, 1953.

The way to deter aggression is for the free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing.

Now, so long as our basic concepts in these respects were unclear, our military leaders could not be selective in building our military power. . . . Before military planning could be changed, the President and his advisers, represented by the National Security Council, had to make some basic policy decisions. This has been done.

And the basic decision was . . . to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate instantly by means and at places of our own choosing.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles,
speech to the Council on Foreign Relations,
January 12, 1954.

We shall continue unabated our efforts to assure that this great force will be used, not for war, but for the well-being of all mankind. Until such assurance can be achieved, however, we have no alternative but to strengthen further our most effective deterrent to armed aggression--the power of our nuclear weapons stockpile.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his
Budget Message to Congress, January 1955.

Where these things are used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Press
Conference, March 16, 1955.

If decision is made to commit our forces, it must be expected that we will bring to bear those weapons that will be most effective in the task of repelling aggression.

Secretary of the Air Force Donald A.
Quarles, September 26, 1956.

The major deterrent to Soviet aggression against NATO is the maintenance of a retaliatory power of such capacity as to convince the Soviets that such aggression would result in their own destruction.

The shield of NATO ground, sea, and air forces is also an integral part of the deterrent. Therefore, NATO should continue its efforts to strengthen the shield, which should increasingly include a nuclear capability. United States forces in Europe--ground, sea, and air--now have such a capability, and this capability is being extended to other NATO forces.

The United States is prepared, if this Council so wishes, to participate in a NATO atomic stockpile. Within this stockpile system, nuclear warheads would be deployed under United States custody in accordance with NATO defensive planning and in agreement with the nations directly concerned. In the event of hostilities, nuclear warheads would be released to the appropriate NATO Supreme Allied Commander for employment by nuclear-capable NATO forces.

We believe that this arrangement meets NATO military requirements and insures that nuclear weapons can be employed promptly when needed.

It remains to assure that nuclear warheads will be readily available to NATO forces in event of hostilities.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles,
December 16, 1956.

Our nuclear weapons and our ability to employ them constitute the most effective deterrent to an attack on the free nations. We shall continue to expand our nuclear arsenal until an agreement has been reached for reduction and regulation of armaments under safeguarded inspection guaranties.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his
Budget Message to Congress, January 1957.

Q. Mr. Dulles, referring again to atomic weapons, would the United States forces in the Pacific have quick access to them in an emergency?

A. The United States forces, yes indeed. Our forces almost everywhere nowadays have atomic weapons as almost a normal part of their equipment. Now we don't take them everywhere, but so far as they are on American soil and under American jurisdiction or on American ships, American planes, they have immediate access to atomic capabilities.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, News
Conference, Canberra, Australia, March 13,
1957.

The argument that the use of nuclear weapons in small wars will automatically bring about a global conflict is one that I never have been able to understand. If there are powers who want to enlarge the local battle, they will do so regardless of what weapons we shall be using. If anything, our successful employment of such weapons might serve as an additional deterrent. If such powers do not want to expand the area of conflict, they will not willfully do so--again, regardless of the weapons we might use. After all, there is no weapon that is not cruel and destructive. It is not the type of weapon that makes the difference. It is the manner in which the weapon is employed.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Nathan Twining, March 22, 1957.

During the *** years [following 1950] the military strategy of the free world allies has been largely based upon our great capacity to retaliate should the Soviet Union launch a war of aggression. It is widely accepted that this strategy of deterrence has, during this period, contributed decisively to the security of the free world.

However, the United States has not been content to rely upon a peace which could be preserved only by a capacity to destroy vast segments of the human race. Such a concept is acceptable only as a last alternative. In recent years there has been no other. But the resourcefulness of those who serve our Nation in the field of science and weapon engineering now shows that it is possible to alter the character of nuclear weapons. It now seems that their use need not involve vast destruction and widespread harm to humanity. Recent tests point to the possibility of possessing nuclear weapons the destructiveness and radiation effects of which can be substantially confined to predetermined targets.

In the future it may thus be feasible to place less reliance upon deterrence of vast retaliatory power. It may be possible to defend countries by nuclear weapons so mobile, or so placed, as to make military invasion with conventional forces a hazardous attempt.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles,
Foreign Affairs, October, 1957.

No matter what their original intent may have been, I cannot believe that any atomic power would accept defeat while withholding its best weapon. If, in desperation, the losing side resorted to atomic weapons, the winning side would also be forced to use them or face defeat. So eventually, even though it starts out to be nonatomic war, war between atomic powers, it seems to me, will inevitably be atomic war.

It seems logical that if we have the strength required for global war, we could certainly meet any threat of lesser magnitude. The important point is, that if we must become involved in a "little war" to meet overt Communist aggression, we should act decisively and with all necessary strength, using our best weapons if required. Otherwise successive erosion could, in the long run, be as disastrous to our free-world position as defeat in a major engagement.

Secretary of the Air Force Donald A. Quarles, February 2, 1957.

We agreed that NATO must be in a position to use all available means to meet any attack which might be launched against it.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, May, 1957.

* * * our basic defense policy is based on the use of atomic weapons in a major war and is based on the use of such atomic weapons as would be militarily feasible and usable in a smaller war, if such a war is forced upon us.

In other words, the smaller atomic weapons, the tactical weapons, in a sense have now become conventional weapons. There is no such thing as a nice, easy-going war.

Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson in testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, 1958.

I want to reiterate what Mr. Wilson has just said, that our whole military program is based on the use of atomic weapons in global war and in the use of atomic weapons in accordance with military necessity in situations short of global war.

In other words, we have built our program to integrate atomic weapons into our offensive and defensive capabilities.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Arthur Radford in testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, 1958.

To facilitate the necessary cooperation on our part legislation amending the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 was enacted during the last session of the Congress. . . . These agreements will enable the United States to cooperate effectively in mutual defense planning with these nations and in the training of their respective NATO forces in order that, if an attack on NATO should occur, under the direction of the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe these forces could effectively use nuclear weapons in their defense.

Special Message to the Congress by
President Dwight D. Eisenhower
Transmitting Proposed Agreements
with Germany, the Netherlands, and
Turkey for Cooperation on Uses of
Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense,
May 26, 1959.

But even more importantly, we need the capability of placing in any critical area at the appropriate time a force which, combined with those of our allies, is large enough to make clear our determination and our ability to defend our rights at all costs--and to meet all levels of aggressor pressure with whatever levels of force are required. We intend to have a wider choice than humiliation or all-out nuclear action.

President John F. Kennedy, Press
Conference, February 14, 1963.

In the event of a major aggression that could not be repulsed by conventional forces, we must be prepared to take whatever action with whatever weapons are appropriate.

Our defense posture must be both flexible and determined. Any potential aggressor contemplating an attack on any part of the Free World with any kind of weapons, conventional or nuclear, must know that our response will be suitable, selective, swift and effective. While he may be uncertain of its exact nature and location, there must be no uncertainty about our determination and capacity to take whatever steps are necessary to meet our obligations. We must be able to make deliberate choices in weapons and strategy, shift the tempo of our production and alter the direction of our forces to meet rapidly changing conditions or objectives at very short notice and under any circumstances.

President John F. Kennedy, Special
Message on the Defense Budget to the
Congress of the United States, March 28,
1961.

Both of these measures--improved conventional forces and increased nuclear forces--are put forward in recognition of the fact that the defense of Europe and the assurances that can be given to the people of Europe and the defense of North America are indivisible--in the hope that no aggressor will mistake our desire for peace with our determination to respond instantly to any attack with whatever force is appropriate.

President John F. Kennedy's Address
before the Canadian Parliament in
Ottawa, May 17, 1961.

It would be our policy to use nuclear weapons wherever we felt it necessary to protect our forces and achieve our objectives.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
before House Appropriations Committee on
FY 1962 Defense Appropriations, 87th
Congress, 1st Session, 1961.

There has been a tendency since the end of the Korean war to emphasize the nuclear capabilities of these forces. These capabilities are, of course, essential to our overall national strategy, since all of our forces have a role in general nuclear war. Even in limited war situations we should not preclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons, for no one can foresee how such situations might develop.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
in testimony before the House Appropriations
Committee 87th Congress, 1st
Session, 1961.

After long and intensive study, we have reached the conclusion that, while our own nuclear forces are increasing, greater emphasis than in the past must be given, both by ourselves and our NATO allies, to our nonnuclear forces. This does not mean that we would hesitate to use nuclear weapons even in a limited war situation, if needed. As I stated in my appearance before the Congress last spring:

*** Even in limited war situations we should not preclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons, for no one can foresee how such situations might develop. But the decision to employ tactical nuclear weapons in limited conflicts should not be forced upon us simply because we have no other means to cope with them. There are many possible situations in which it would not be advisable or feasible to use such weapons.

What is being proposed today, as it was then, is not a reversal of our existing national policy but an increase in our nonnuclear capabilities to provide a greater degree of versatility to our limited war forces.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, January 24, 1962.

Q. Mr. President, could you elaborate on the idea attributed to you in a magazine article that there may be circumstances under which we would have to take the initiative in a nuclear war?

A. The President. Yes I think Mr. Salinger's statement made it very clear that this was intended to be merely a restatement of a traditional position where if a vital area--and I think the area that Mr. Salinger used was West Europe--were being overrun by conventional forces, that the United States would take means, available means, to defend Western Europe.

President John F. Kennedy's Press Conference, March 29, 1962.

Accordingly, we should plan for the 1965-1967 time period a force which could: 1. Strike back decisively at the entire Soviet target system simultaneously; or 2. Strike back, first, at the Soviet bomber bases, missiles sites and other military installations associated with their long-range nuclear forces to reduce the power of any follow-on attack--and then, if necessary, strike back at the Soviet urban and industrial complex in a controlled and deliberate way. Such a force would give us the needed flexibility to meet a wide range of possible general war situations.

FY 1963 Posture Statement of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara.

The U.S. has come to the conclusion that to the extent feasible, basic military strategy in a possible nuclear war should be approached in much the same way that more conventional military operations have been regarded in the past. That is to say, principal military objectives, in the event of a nuclear war stemming from a major attack on the Alliance, should be the destruction of the enemy's military forces, not of his civilian population.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, Commencement Speech, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, June 16, 1962.

We know that the same forces which are targeted on ourselves are also targeted on our allies. Our own strategic retaliatory forces are prepared to respond against these forces, wherever they are and whatever their targets. This mission is assigned not only in fulfillment of our treaty commitments but also because the character of nuclear war compels it. More specifically, the U.S. is as much concerned with that portion of Soviet nuclear striking power that can reach Western Europe as with that portion that also can reach the United States. In short, we have undertaken the nuclear defense of NATO on a global basis. This will continue to be our objective. In the execution of this mission, the weapons in the European theater are only one resource among many....

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara,
Ann Arbor speech, June 16, 1962.

The loss of Western Europe would be destructive to the interests of the United States. So we feel that there is no question that these weapons would be used to protect the security of Western Europe.

President John F. Kennedy's News
Conference of February 14, 1963.

In talking about global nuclear war, the Soviet leaders always say that they would strike at the entire complex of our military power including government and production centers, meaning our cities. If they were to do so, we would, of course, have no alternative but to retaliate in kind. But we have no way of knowing whether they would actually do so. It would certainly be in their interest as well as ours to try to limit the terrible consequences of a nuclear exchange. By building into our forces a flexible capability, we at least eliminate the prospect that we could strike back in only one way, namely, against the entire Soviet target system including their cities. Such a prospect would give the Soviet Union no incentive to withhold attack against our cities in a first strike. We want to give them a better alternative. Whether they would accept it in the crisis of a global nuclear war, no one can say. Considering what is at stake, we believe it is worth the additional effort on our part to have this option.

1964 Posture Statement of Secretary
of Defense Robert S. McNamara.

... We have stated many, many times--I have stated on several different occasions, I stated it in Germany, I have stated it on three occasions I can recall in this country--that we will use whatever weapons are necessary to protect our interests, including nuclear weapons. Pravda has printed my statements because we have had them returned

to us. There has been conversation among the Soviets regarding such statements as I have made, and as the President has made, about our willingness to use nuclear weapons in defense of our interest.

Finally, it is perfectly clear that Khrushchev believed we would utilize nuclear weapons or any other weapons necessary to destroy the missiles which he deployed in Cuba. It is clear that he believed that by the action he took (deleted) and it is clear that he was right in his belief because we would have used whatever weapons were necessary to destroy those missiles moved into Cuba.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
before Senate Armed Services Committee,
February 22, 1963, Military Procurement
Authorization, Fiscal Year 1964.

... We would propose to use nuclear weapons or any other weapons whenever we felt our vital interests require their use.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
before Senate Armed Services Committee,
February 22, 1963.

Many people would believe that any military action in Europe, short of a very minor probe, would require the immediate use of nuclear weapons, and I stress the word "immediate." Certainly a massive attack on Western Europe would have to be met with whatever weapons are required to counter it. That has always been the policy of the Western Alliance. And, I have repeatedly stated before this committee that "even in limited war situations we should not preclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons."

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
in testifying before the House Committee
on Appropriations, 88th Congress, 1st
Session, 1963.

Not only is there no lessening in the will to use those weapons, as has been stated repeatedly by the President and others in the Government, including myself, but we have ample evidence that the Soviets recognize our will and intention to use those weapons should it be necessary to protect our vital interests.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
in testifying before the House Committee
on Appropriations, 88th Congress, 1st
Session, 1963.

We have placed several thousand nuclear weapons in Europe. They are there at the present time. It would be our policy to use them when it is necessary to protect our vital interests.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
in testifying before the House Committee
on Armed Services, 88th Congress, 2d
Session, 1964.

Our most recent studies support the general conclusions reached last year, namely, that: (1) The forces envisioned in NATO plans for the end of 1966, fully manned, trained, equipped, and properly positioned, could hold an initial Soviet attack on the Central Front using nonnuclear means alone; (2) Until these requirements are met the defense of Europe against an all-out Soviet attack, even if such an attack were limited to nonnuclear means, would require the use of tactical nuclear weapons on our part.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
in testifying before the House Committee
on Armed Services, 88th Congress, 2d
Session, 1964.

Mr. Mahon. Now, there seems to be some uncertainty as to whether or not we are willing to risk and employ our maximum nuclear potential in a war. Have we come to the conclusion in the Defense Department that we will not use, and will not be called upon to use, strategic nuclear weapons?

Secretary McNamara. We hope we will not be called upon to use them, because we believe our power is so great and so apparent to our opponents that they realize that were we called upon to use them, we would literally destroy the Soviet Union and its associated satellite states. But certainly we have not come to the point where we would say to ourselves, or to others, that we would not use them. Clearly we would use them in the protection of our basic national interests including the collective defense of the free world. But we will not endanger the survival of our Nation and our allies for anything less than a threat that was directed at that survival.

Mr. Mahon. If the survival of the Nation is definitely threatened, we would hazard the use of nuclear weapons in order to prevent it, would we not?

Secretary McNamara. Without question.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara
before Subcommittee of House Appropriations
Committee, February 17, 1964.

NATO should not only have an improved capability to meet major nonnuclear assaults with nonnuclear means and forces prepared for that option, but it should also achieve a true tactical nuclear capability which should include a broad, flexible range of nuclear options, short of general nuclear war, and the means to implement them.

FY 1966 Posture Statement of
Secretary of Defense Robert S.
McNamara.

As one of the nations having nuclear weapons, the United States--all through these years--has borne an awesome responsibility. This treaty increases that responsibility--for we have pledged that we shall use our weapons only in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

Furthermore, we have made clear to the United Nations Security Council what I would like to repeat today: If a state which has accepted this treaty does not have nuclear weapons and is a victim of aggression, or is subject to a threat of aggression, involving nuclear weapons, the United States shall be prepared to ask immediate Security Council action to provide assistance in accordance with the Charter.

Remarks of President Lyndon B. Johnson
at the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, July 1, 1968.

Until technology progresses to the point where an effective ABM defense against the Soviet threat becomes feasible, our major hope for limiting damage if a nuclear war occurs is that it can be stopped short of an all-out attack on our cities. We try to bring this about by providing our forces with characteristics that will permit them to be used effectively in a limited and controlled retaliation as well as for 'Assured Destruction', thereby being prepared for any type of Soviet attack.

FY 1970 Posture Statement of Secretary
of Defense Clark M. Clifford, January
1969.

... We shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

* * * * *

To deter conventional aggression, we and our allies together must be capable of posing unacceptable risks to potential enemies. We must not be in a position of being able to employ only strategic weapons to meet challenges to our interests. On the other hand, having a full range of options does not mean that we will necessarily limit our response to the level or intensity chosen by an enemy. Potential enemies must know that we will respond to whatever degree is required to protect our interests. They must also know that they will only worsen their situation by escalating the level of violence.

President Richard M. Nixon's Foreign Policy Report to Congress, February 25, 1971.

Our forces must be maintained at a level sufficient to make it clear that even an all-out surprise attack on the United States by the USSR would not cripple our capability to retaliate. Our forces must also be capable of flexible application. A simple "assured destruction" doctrine does not meet our present requirements for a flexible range of strategic options. No President should be left with only one strategic course of action, particularly that of ordering the mass destruction of enemy civilians and facilities.

President Richard M. Nixon's Foreign Policy Report to Congress, 1972.

A different strategic doctrine is required in this decade when potential adversaries possess large and more flexible nuclear forces. The threat of an all-out nuclear response involving the cities of both sides might not be as credible a deterrent as it was in the 1960's. An aggressor, in the unlikely event of nuclear war, might choose to employ nuclear weapons selectively and in limited numbers for limited objectives. No President should ever be in the position where his only option in meeting such aggression is an all-out nuclear response. To deal with a wide range of possible hostile actions, the President must maintain a broad choice of options. . . .

Potential aggressors must be aware that the United States will continue to have both the resolve and the capacity to act in the face of aggression in all circumstances.

President Richard M. Nixon's Foreign Policy Report to Congress, May 3, 1973.

Why, then, do we maintain such large and diversified nuclear capabilities in our main theater commands? The answer is threefold. First, maintaining these capabilities is essential to deterrence so long as opposing forces maintain similar capabilities. They help to deter a limited first-use of nuclear weapons by an opponent and along with the conventional and nuclear forces help create a general deterrent against either conventional or nuclear aggression. Second, should deterrence fail, the tactical nuclear capabilities provide a source of nuclear options for defense other than the use of the strategic forces. Third, given our doctrine of flexible response, we do not preclude the use of nuclear weapons by the United States and its allies in order to prevent a successful aggression.

FY 1975 Posture Statement of Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, January, 1974.

But if, for whatever reason, deterrence should fail, we want to have the planning flexibility to be able to respond selectively to the attack in such a way as to (1) limit the chances of uncontrolled escalation, and (2) hit meaningful targets with a sufficient accuracy-yield combination to destroy only the intended target and to avoid widespread collateral damage.

FY 1965 Posture Statement of Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, January, 1974.

NATO conventional forces are structured for a range of likely conditions of NATO and Warsaw Pact mobilization, likely assumptions about the number of Soviet divisions committed against NATO, and expected performance of forces of both sides. It is possible to envision significantly worse circumstances than those planning assumptions in which NATO conventional forces are unable to hold under conventional attack. Consequently, such a contingency makes it impossible to rule out NATO first use of theater nuclear forces.

Report of Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger to Congress in compliance with PL 93-365, "The Theater Nuclear Force Posture in Europe", April 1, 1975.

The United States has consistently refrained from disavowing the first use of nuclear weapons. It has been under pressure from various quarters basically for more than twenty-five years to disavow first use. ...

The American policy on this has been unchanged for many years. The changes that have occurred, in fact, have been the result of a gradual evolution towards increasing stress on the conventional components, a diminution on the threat of immediate recourse to nuclear weapons. This has, I think, been an evolution that has been followed for the past twenty years, but under no circumstances could we disavow the first use of nuclear weapons. ...

NATO strategy since the 1950s has been based either on the so-called trip-wire strategy, which prevails into the 1960s and formally prevailed to 1967 when it was shifted to flexible response. The trip-wire strategy, sometimes called the plate glass window, was designed to have a small force sometimes referred to as a corporal's guard up front so that the nuclear bell could ring. The intention was to respond to conventional attack with a nuclear response. Throughout the period since the 1950s we have put emphasis upon the availability of tactical nuclear weapons but I think that the emphasis has gradually shifted towards conventional weapons without in any way reducing the role that nuclear weapons play in deterrence.

Secretary of Defense James R.
Schlesinger before Godfrey Sperling
Group, July 1, 1975.

If one looks back, one sees that in the early 1950s the Soviets pressed us very hard for a declaration against first use; that was in a period in which they had, or were perceived to have, overwhelming conventional strength in Europe and they were in a relatively insignificant posture in terms of nuclear weapons. In that period of time they pressed us hard. In the 1960s their interest in such a declaration waned as their nuclear posture improved and perhaps as they became aware of the intractable difficulties associated with their southeast frontier. So that pressure has disappeared. On the other hand, the Chinese now for obvious reasons have begun to talk about no first use. If one accepts the no first use doctrine, one is accepting a self denying ordinance that weakens deterrence. The underlying purpose and premise of U.S. military policy is to deter attack on the U.S. itself and our Allies and part of the deterrent, a major part of the deterrent, is the existence of our tactical nuclear force. Consistently in Europe we have stated, as we recently restated in the ministerial guidance, the close relationship between conventional capabilities and tactical nuclear capabilities as well as strategic capabilities in the NATO triad and the mutual reinforcement amongst these we felt was what deterred any possibility of Warsaw Pact probing.

Secretary of Defense James R.
Schlesinger before Godfrey Sperling
Group, July 1, 1975.

If there were any hint from the United States Government that we were to accept the blandishments of a few people in the arms control community or a few people on the Capitol Hill that we would refrain from first use, that would have a devastating effect on NATO because NATO depends, in large degree, psychologically as well as in terms of force structure on nuclear reinforcement of conventional capabilities should that be necessary. It is agreed NATO strategy. It was reiterated in the Ministerial guidance that reflects the shift to flexible response in 1967. With regard to the strategic aspect of things, the change in doctrine announced a year and a half ago towards greater selectivity and flexibility has been universally welcomed in Europe for obvious reasons and it serves to recouple to the extent that it had decoupled our strategic and tactical nuclear forces.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger before the Godfrey Sperling Group, July 1, 1975.

It is, I believe, known that we have deployed nuclear weapons in Europe and Korea along with our forces and that those nuclear weapons are available as options to the President but I reiterate that the main thrust of U.S. policy has been to raise the nuclear threshold. We will not foreclose the use of nuclear weapons.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger before the Godfrey Sperling Group, July 1, 1975.

We cannot exclude the possibility of using nuclear weapons, but our thrust has been towards reliance upon conventional capabilities to the extent that we can. Therefore, I would not expect, given any reasonable stalwartness of our conventional capabilities, early recourse of nuclear weapons-- either strategic or tactical. We however, will make use of nuclear weapons should we be faced with serious aggression likely to result in defeat in an area of very great importance to the United States in terms of foreign policy. This has clearly been the case in Western Europe for many years and has been stated again and again by all Secretaries and all Presidents going back to the 1950s with regard to NATO.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger before the Godfrey Sperling Group, July 1, 1975.

For many years the United States has relied for deterrence purposes on the possibility of employing nuclear weapons. As I indicated, we have tried to reduce the likelihood of that and to raise the nuclear threshold, but first use has been U.S. policy and we have been under pressure in the past from other countries to disavow the first use of nuclear weapons because it would undermine deterrence.

No administration has ever done that; no administration has seriously contemplated moving in that direction.

In the case of Europe, the strategy in the 1950s and up until 1967 was largely in terms of a thin conventional force and if that force was penetrated that nuclear weapons would be immediately employed.

So the United States has consistently had a policy of refraining from disavowing first use.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger
on ABC News Issues and Answers, July
6, 1975.

I think that the United States has felt an obligation to nonnuclear weapon states that were under threat of nuclear attack. That is, of course, different from our unequivocal pledges to use the nuclear forces of the United States to protect the United States and its allies in the case, for example, of NATO.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger
on ABC News Issues and Answers, July
6, 1975.

Of course, the United States, once again, has always been in a defensive posture. The commitments to NATO are commitments to a defensive alliance and I think it should be restated unequivocally that what we are talking about is a response to an aggression and that the purpose of a projected response is to deter. Deterrence is intended to make recourse to force by somebody hostile to us an unattractive alternative.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger
on ABC News Issues and Answers, July
6, 1975.

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Nuclear weapons would be employed only in cases of outright aggression where circumstances were indeed so desperate that there seemed to be no other alternative.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger
on ABC News Issues and Answers, July
6, 1975.

There is the residual possibility that in the event of major aggression against the United States and its allies that the United States may have to employ nuclear weapons, but the thrust of our policy has been in the other direction, to attempt to raise the nuclear threshold rather than to lower it.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger
on ABC News Issues and Answers, July
6, 1975.

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